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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4297  
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RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 7794  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 0840  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 3629  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 8454  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1925  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 0447  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4025  
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 7182  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 7284  
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 5906  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NEW DELHI 007748

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SUBJECT: BOUCHER DISCUSSES PAKISTAN, IRAN, AND AFGHANISTAN  
WITH INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY

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Classified By: Polcouns Ted Osius for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

**¶11.** (C) Summary: Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher met with Indian Joint Secretary Dilip Sinha on November 10th to discuss India's relations with Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan. Boucher emphasized the importance to the United States that India voice its concerns publicly about Iran's nuclear program during Iranian Foreign Minister Mottaki's trip to India for the Afghan Regional Economic Cooperation Conference. Sinha stressed the importance to India of the success of the Afghan donor conference, including his hope that it will help Afghanistan resolve some barriers to regional trade. He said further that he expects few significant announcements from the Foreign Secretary talks between India and Pakistan on November 14th and 15th; instead the two countries would focus on working out the modalities of the joint counter-terror mechanism. End Summary.

Iranian Foreign Minister Visit

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**¶12.** (C) Assistant Secretary Boucher emphasized to Joint-Secretary Sinha that it is very important to the United States that India make public its concern about Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons during the upcoming visit of Iranian Foreign Minister Mottaki to India for the Afghan Regional Economic Cooperation Conference. Sinha responded that India's relationship with Iran is an important one. He

said that the visit, the first since Mottaki took office, had already been postponed from July. Boucher stressed, however, that because Foreign Minister Mottaki will be the only minister of that level participating in the Afghan Donor Conference, his visit will receive a great deal of attention, so it will be important to the U.S. that India make clear its concern about Iran at that time.

Transit of Indian Aid to Afghanistan Across Pakistan

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¶3. (C) Sinha stressed that one of the most important reasons India has to maintain its relationship with Iran is that it cannot transport goods and aid across Pakistan to reach Afghanistan, instead it has to send shipments through Iran. He said that Pakistan had allowed some overland transit in 2002, and again this year Pakistan has allowed 200 mini-buses to travel across, but this is nowhere near the amount of goods that India needs to send to Afghanistan. Boucher emphasized that trade links are very important for South Asia, and it is clear that in the long term the issue must be resolved. He explained that part of the problem is one of communication -- when we discuss the issue with Pakistani officials, they say that only a small list of goods cannot be transported across Pakistan, but when we discuss this with Indian officials, they say that only a small list of goods is allowed to cross Pakistan to Afghanistan. Sinha clarified that India is talking about overland transit, while Pakistan is discussing goods entering Pakistan by sea through Karachi.

He said that there are too many barriers for India to rely on transit through Karachi. The issue is ultimately about India's bilateral relationship with Pakistan, and Pakistan's failure to implement the South Asia Free Trade Agreement, which it has adopted. Pakistan has a small list of items --

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1075 products (recently raised from 775) -- that India can import into Pakistan, but even these goods have to enter the country by sea and not directly over land.

¶4. (C) Sinha further stressed that the trade barriers are a significant regional problem. Even though Pakistan allows goods to come from Afghanistan to India overland, the trade barriers mean that transit is very expensive and takes a tremendous amount of time. Melons coming from Central Asia, for example have to be loaded and unloaded and carried across borders by hand several times -- causing them to spoil before they can reach India. He said Afghanistan is focusing on selling dried fruit -- particularly to New Delhi -- because it doesn't spoil as quickly. Pakistan permits the trade in one direction only, however. Boucher said that most countries in the region recognize that these issues have to change at some point, but cautioned that we have to make sure the change happens naturally.

India-Pakistan Foreign Secretary Talks

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¶5. (C) When asked by Assistant Secretary Boucher whether there would be any big announcements at the India-Pakistan Foreign Secretary talks on November 14 and 15, Sinha said major announcements are very unlikely. He said he hopes that there will be an agreement on the modalities of the joint mechanism. When asked, he said the agreement is likely to be with both the ministries and law enforcement, and that meetings will probably be held periodically not constantly. He said he believes that the mechanism can be useful, but if it is the way it used to be, when Pakistan's response to India's requests was a blanket "no," then nothing will come out of it.

¶6. (C) Boucher stressed that everyone agrees to the main principle -- that we are all against terrorism. He said, however, that the Pakistanis are concerned about Indian activity in Afghanistan and Balochistan. Sinha responded that the Pakistanis know that their allegations are

unfounded. He said, for example, when one person killed in Afghanistan is a Hindu, there is an outcry in Pakistan about India's presence. He said he has not seen any evidence from Pakistan that India is engaged in the activity that Pakistan says it is involved in. Sinha said that India has only 12 people in its consulates in Jalalabad and Kandahar, including the security presence it needs to protect its people.

¶17. (C) Sinha said further that talks are taking place on Siachen and Sir Creek at the working level. He said the Defense Ministers are talking about what needs to be done further on Siachen. He said on Sir Creek there was a proposal for a joint survey and there will be a meeting in December to discuss it.

¶18. (C) Sinha said that a possible deliverable from the Foreign Secretary talks, beyond working out the modalities of the joint mechanism, will be an announcement of a new shipping protocol between India and Pakistan. Previously bilateral trade could not be transported by third-country ships, but now both countries have agreed to liberalize this provision.

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¶19. (C) When Sinha asked about the Waziristan agreement, Boucher explained that the agreement has not yet worked, that infiltration of Taliban insurgents into Afghanistan is as high as it was before the agreement. He said the theory that tribal elders can stop infiltration is being tested, and the jury is still out. He said it is clear, however, that the Pakistanis are determined to pacify the area, and at the highest levels of government they say they did the right thing in Bajaur. He said on each subject, whether it is al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, or Lashkar-e-Taiba, it is clear that the Pakistanis are determined to work against these violent groups. He stressed to Sinha that the United States is very concerned about the Taliban because they are coming across and shooting at our troops, and we have told the Pakistanis that we are seeing enough links between the different groups that we have to focus on all of them.

Overland Transport Sinha's Personal Interest  
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¶110. (C) Comment: Joint-Secretary Sinha seemed to be very focused on Pakistan's refusal to allow goods to be transported overland from India to Afghanistan and back across Pakistan. Heavily interested in the success of the Afghan Regional Economic Cooperation Conference, he is focusing on the transit issue not only as an irritant between India and Pakistan and a hurdle to India's cooperation with the United States on Iranian issues, but also as a significant barrier to Afghanistan's development and reconstruction.

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